

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Clermont

other names/site number Clermont Farm; DHR File No. 021-0019

2. Location

street & number 801 East Main Street not for publication ☐

city or town Berryville vicinity ☒

state Virginia code VA county Clarke County code 043 Zip 22611

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official _____ Date _____

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is: ☐ other (explain): _____

☐ entered in the National Register

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the

National Register

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register

☐ removed from the National Register

Signature of Keeper _____

Date of Action _____

U. S. Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceClermont
Clarke County, Virginia

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
☐ public-local
☒ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- ☐ building(s)
☒ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>9</u>	<u>2</u>	buildings
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>14</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>DOMESTIC</u>	Sub: <u>single dwellings</u>
<u>DOMESTIC</u>	<u>secondary structure</u>
<u>AGRICULTURE</u>	<u>storage</u>
<u>AGRICULTURE</u>	<u>animal facility</u>
<u>AGRICULTURE</u>	<u>agricultural outbuilding</u>
<u>FUNERARY</u>	<u>cemetery</u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>DOMESTIC</u>	Sub: <u>single dwellings</u>
<u>DOMESTIC</u>	<u>secondary structure</u>
<u>AGRICULTURE</u>	<u>storage</u>
<u>AGRICULTURE</u>	<u>animal facility</u>
<u>AGRICULTURE</u>	<u>agricultural facility</u>
<u>FUNERARY</u>	<u>cemetery</u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)COLONIAL: Southern ColonialEARLY REPUBLIC: Federal

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)foundation STONE: Limestone; BRICKroof WOOD: Shinglewalls WOOD: WeatherboardSTONE: Limestoneother WOOD: Log

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.
-

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTUREARCHITECTUREPeriod of Significance circa 1770-1955Significant Dates circa 1770circa 1810circa 1840

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/ACultural Affiliation N/AArchitect/Builder unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.☐ previously listed in the National Register☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register☐ designated a National Historic Landmark☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____**Primary Location of Additional Data**☒ State Historic Preservation Office☐ Other State agency☐ Federal agency☐ Local government☐ University☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical DataAcreage of Property approximately 355 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

1 _____ 2 _____

3 _____ 4 _____

☒ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: David Edwards, Director; Joanna Evans, Programs Specialist

Organization: Winchester Regional Office, Virginia Department of Historic Resources Date: May 1, 2005

street & number: 107 N. Kent Street, Suite 203 telephone: 540-722-3427

city or town Winchester state VA zip code 22601

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Virginia Department of Historic Resources

street & number 2801 Kensington Avenue telephone (804) 367-2323

city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23221

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia

Section 7 Page 1

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Clermont is a 355-acre farm of fenced rolling pastureland dotted with deciduous trees located on the eastern outskirts of the Town of Berryville in north-central Clarke County, Virginia. The farm's main dwelling, located on a slope centered on the property, has evolved over the property's 250-year history to the distinctive five-part house seen today. The original one-and-a-half-story easternmost frame section was probably built around 1770. An originally detached one-story frame kitchen at the westernmost end of the present dwelling may date to the same period. A frame one-and-a-half-story addition was constructed to the western end of the original dwelling around 1810. A circa 1840, two-story, limestone addition was then built perpendicular to the detached kitchen. Finally a two-story frame addition was built in 1970 connecting the kitchen and the stone addition to the rest of the house. Two contributing domestic outbuildings are located southwest of the main house: a late-eighteenth-century, pyramidal-roofed, frame smokehouse and a one-story, double-pen, log servants' quarters possibly dating to the mid-nineteenth century that was heavily remodeled in the early twentieth century. Southeast of the house are the ruins of an icehouse and a slave cemetery surrounded by a circle of trees, both contributing sites. A dirt drive leads a short distance south of the house to a nineteenth-century stone and log springhouse, the stone foundation of a small outbuilding, an early-twentieth-century frame barn with attached late-nineteenth-century frame corncrib and two silos, and a circa 1915 one-and-a-half-story frame and stucco tenant house, all contributing resources. Just to the south of the tenant house is a log smokehouse of unknown date and two mid-twentieth-century frame tractor sheds. Another tenant house, located at the southwestern boundary of the farm, is a two-story frame and weatherboard dwelling constructed around 1910. A one-story log outbuilding of unknown original use located southwest of the main house was modified most likely in the early- to mid-twentieth century into a one-bay garage and then a second bay was added after 1988. A greenhouse of the late twentieth century is located behind the garage, both of which are non-contributing resources. Clermont is a well-preserved farmstead that has remained intact for over 250 years and still affords undisturbed views of the Blue Ridge Mountains to the south and mostly forested lands to the east and west.

Section 7 Page 2

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia

Architectural Analysis

Main House

Access to Clermont is by way of a dirt drive that leads from Business Route 7, through a modern metal gate flanked by sections of a board fence, and continues along a slope bordered by broad pasturelands, then diverges—one drive leading to the barn and tenant house, the other leading into a wood-fence-enclosed area containing the picturesque five-part main dwelling and domestic outbuildings situated on a grassy slope shaded by old oak trees.

The north elevation of the present house was originally the rear elevation due to an 1870 realignment of the main road from Berryville to Snicker's Ferry at the Shenandoah River. The easternmost section of the house is considered the earliest part and was probably constructed by Edward Snickers around 1770. It is a 31' x 21', one-and-a-half-story, frame dwelling clad in wide beaded shiplap and has a fieldstone foundation, a steeply-pitched gable roof covered in wooden shingles, and an exterior-end chimney at each gable end. A small molded wooden cornice extends across the north and south elevations and beaded raking cornices extend along the roof slopes on the east and west gable ends. Two gable dormers emerge from the roof on the north elevation, while three gable dormers are on the south elevation. The easternmost exterior-end brick chimney is laid in five-course American bond and features steeply-pitched stepped shoulders and an upper brick stack. The western exterior-end chimney is limestone with an upper brick stack with corbelling and recessed decorative brick panels. The form of the original house and certain architectural details, such as its highly pitched gable roof and exterior-end brick chimney with upper brick stack detached from the gable end, are characteristics associated with Anglo-Virginian houses of the same period in the Piedmont and Tidewater regions of Virginia.¹ Since much of present-day Clarke County was originally settled by families of these eastern regions, it is not surprising that they brought their building traditions with them.²

The three-bay north elevation of the original house is sheltered by a four-bay Tuscan-columned porch extending across its entire length. The central entrance, consisting of a six-panel wooden door and a three-light rectangular transom topped by a Greek Revival-inspired pediment, is flanked by a single nine-over-nine-sash wooden window surrounded by simple beaded trim and flanked by operable wooden-louvered shutters. The south elevation has the same window-door-

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia

window configuration; however, a long, eight-bay, shed-roofed porch extends across the original dwelling and its western addition. It features Tuscan colonnettes atop pedestals with chamfered corners, plank railings, a wooden plank floor atop a brick foundation, and is now screened. A bulkhead entrance to the cellar of the original house is located at the east gable end. It consists of batten double doors with hand-forged strap hinges. The cellar was not used for cooking and exhibits hewn and sawn joists mortise-and-tenoned into a summer beam.

The first floor of the original house consists of a central passage-single pile plan with a narrow northeast corner stair hall extending perpendicular to the central passage. Containing a quarter-turn stair with winders, the stair hall is lighted by an exterior window on one side and a window situated in an interior partition on the other side. This unusual feature allows natural light to pass through the stair hall to the interior of the east room (library). Clermont's rare floor plan is the only known example of the type in the region. The stair hall is also noted for its paneled wainscot and molded chair rail on both walls—the only space in the house so treated. The central passage, east room (library), and west room (parlor) each have random-width pine floorboard patterns that do not correspond to those in adjacent spaces, thus supporting the conclusion that the central passage is original to the house and was not created at a later date. The rooms have plastered walls and ceilings, simple baseboards, six-panel doors with iron box locks (some with original keys), nine-over-nine-sash windows, double-architrave door and window trim, most with quarter-round molding, and Greek Revival-style mantels. Only one window, located on the south wall of the east room (library), appears to have its original sashes with wide quarter-round muntins, while the other windows in the house have thin muntins and appear to date to the early nineteenth century. The mantels in the east and west rooms have broad pilasters, high plain friezes, and a slab-like shelf. The second floor contains three rooms; only the western bedroom is heated by a fireplace. Its late-eighteenth-century mantel, which appears to be the oldest surviving mantel in the house, features broad trim around the firebox, a narrow frieze, and a heavy molded shelf. The room has a batten door displaying hand-forged iron HL hinges and the dormer windows contain four-over-four wooden sashes.

According to its architectural character, around 1810 a 25' x 21' frame addition on a three-course American-bond brick foundation was attached to the western end of the original house. It also has shiplap siding, nine-over-nine-sash windows, and two gable dormers on the south elevation that were added in the mid-twentieth century. Consisting of a dining room on the first floor and a bedroom above, this section of the house exhibits early-nineteenth-century Federal-style woodwork including **Section** __7__ **Page** _4_

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia**

double architrave window and door trim with quarter-round molding, wooden doors with six slightly recessed panels and small iron box locks, and a dining room mantel with paneled pilasters, a paneled frieze, and a molded shelf displaying gougework. The dining room also has random-width pine floorboards, plain baseboards, and no chair rails. An enclosed quarter-turn stair with winders is situated in the southwestern corner of the dining room. It is accessed by a thin six-panel door in which each panel has concave corners—the only example of this type of door in the house. The bedroom above has split-sawn lath and plastered walls. A balustrade separating the stair from the rest of the room consists of a heavy rounded handrail supported by simple balusters. A six-light casement window is situated at the west gable end, while a four-light example is at the east gable end.

The westernmost end of the present house is believed to have been the original detached kitchen that was eventually connected to the rest of the house by later additions. It is a 28' x 15', one-story, gable-roofed structure on a stone foundation and is constructed of hewn and sawn framing members with brick nogging between the studs. This section is clad with plain weatherboards (some of which have deteriorated allowing a glimpse of the framework behind), and features six-over-six-sash windows with batten shutters, and a batten door with iron strap hinges, large iron pintles, and an iron box lock. A massive random-rubble stone chimney with a single pair of shoulders and a short upper brick section is positioned at the west gable end. No original interior woodwork survives due to a recent remodeling that was never completed; however, the cooking fireplace with a brick elliptical arch supported by a metal strap over a stone firebox, wide brick hearth, and original iron cooking crane have been exposed. Rafters in the attic are pegged and have high collar beams.

Based on tax records and architectural character, around 1840 a two-story random rubble stone addition with a large exterior-end stone chimney was constructed perpendicular to the east end of the original kitchen.³ Consisting of a bedroom on each floor, this section features a mid-nineteenth-century Greek Revival-style mantel with broad plain pilasters, a plain frieze, and a slab-like shelf in the first-floor bedroom and a Federal-style mantel with paneled pilasters and a molded shelf in the second-floor bedroom. A mid-nineteenth-century curved stair with a turned newel, tapering round balusters, and a heavy rounded handrail rises from the first-floor bedroom to the second floor.

In 1970 a two-story frame addition with shiplap siding, wood-shingle roof, six-over-six-sash windows, a recessed corner porch, and a brick foundation was constructed east of the old kitchen. Tying all the sections of the house together, this addition was designed to complement the

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia**

architecture of the earlier sections not only in its overall design but also in its attention to detail such as shiplap siding studded with rosehead nails and operable wooden louvered shutters. This last addition contains a kitchen, pantry, hall, sitting room, bedroom, and two bathrooms, and it provides access to the cellar beneath the dining room via an open-air passage beneath the porch.

Landscape

A few yards south of the house is a semicircular row of small boxwoods and plantings. Several yards east of the boxwoods are the ruins of an icehouse filled with a collapsed structure that once sheltered the deep pit. A short distance southeast of the icehouse is a circle of trees that marks the site of a cemetery, a burial place for slaves according to the most recent owner of Clermont.⁴ Several limestone fragments are scattered around the site, two of which are upright and may have served as grave markers.

Secondary Buildings

Southwest of the house is a complex of domestic outbuildings consisting of a smokehouse, log servants' quarters, and a garage. The smokehouse appears to date from the late eighteenth century and is a well-preserved, pyramidal-roofed frame structure clad in shiplap siding and resting on a stone foundation. It features a batten door with forged iron strap hinges hung on iron pintles and a metal box lock, a king-post roof system, hewn studs placed only a few inches apart, hewn down braces, two small louvered smoke vents, wooden salt bins with hinged lids, and blackened beams on the interior.

The log servants' quarters may date from the mid-nineteenth century. It is a one-story, double-pen log structure on a stone foundation with a steeply-pitched wood-shingled gable roof and a central brick chimney.⁵ Two board-and-batten shed additions with casement windows flanking a recessed porch extend from the front of the building. Ceiling joists are hewn and a heavy box cornice extends across the front of the building. Remodeled in the early twentieth century, the interior shows no evidence of fireplaces, but the original chimney may have been replaced with the present small brick flue. The attic reveals that half of the rafters (those on the west slope) were replaced in the twentieth century. Thin partitions divide the two log pens into four rooms. Just south of the servants' quarters is a one-story log outbuilding of unknown original use. It was

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia**

converted into a one-bay garage sometime during the early to mid-twentieth century when frame side and rear additions were constructed, one of the log walls was removed, and the structure received a new corrugated metal gable roof. After 1988 the building was enlarged to two bays. Behind the garage is a modern greenhouse, most likely built in the late twentieth century. The garage and greenhouse are noncontributing resources.

The main farm road leads south around the western end of the house and outbuildings to a large frame barn bank barn believed to be built around 1917⁶ and a circa 1915 stucco tenant house situated on a knoll beyond Dog Run, which traverses the property. Along the way a nineteenth-century springhouse and a stone foundation of an outbuilding of unknown use are situated at the crossing of the farm road over Dog Run. The two-level springhouse consists of a random-rubble stone lower story and an upper log structure capped by a standing-seam metal gable roof with wide overhanging eaves. The logs are v-notched and the roof framing members are circular sawn. A small gable-roofed porch shelters the entrance on the north elevation.

The early-twentieth century frame bank barn sits atop a knoll in the center of the property and is clad with vertical boards and situated on a poured concrete foundation. The five-bent structure features tall sliding wooden doors, circular-sawn and pegged frame construction, a metal gable roof, and two detached silos--one of poured concrete and the other metal--situated at the western end of the barn. The upper level contains three large corner grain bins. The livestock area below is divided into animal pens with hay mows and feeding troughs. Frame, gable-roofed loafing sheds on poured concrete foundations are attached to each gable end of the barn. An attached corncrib perpendicular to the eastern loafing shed appears to predate the barn. It is a hewn and mortise-and-tenoned frame structure with vertical board siding and sapling rafters and is supported by a stone pier foundation.

Tenant Houses

The farm road ends at the fenced yard of a tenant house. Built around 1915, it is a one-and-a-half-story frame and stucco dwelling on a stone foundation with a metal gable roof, interior-end chimneys, three projecting wall gable dormers on the front, six-over-six-sash windows, and a central front door flanked by sidelights. A three-bay porch extends across the front of the house.

Section 7 **Page** 7

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia**

To the rear of the dwelling is a log meat house of unknown date that has been raised onto a high concrete foundation. It has square notching and a hipped roof. Two frame tractor sheds south and east of the house appear to date from the early to mid-twentieth century. One is clad in board-and-batten and both have standing-seam-metal shed roofs.

The farm's second tenant house is accessed by way of State Route 613, which forms part of the southern boundary of the farm. A short drive leads from the road to the two-story frame dwelling on a small knoll. Probably built around 1910, it is clad in German siding and is supported on a concrete foundation. It has a three-bay facade and front porch, modern replaced windows, a standing-seam metal gable roof, and a rear ell with an enclosed porch.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia

NOTES

1. Paul E. Buchanan, "The Eighteenth-Century Frame Houses of Tidewater Virginia," *Building Early America: Contributions Toward the History of a Great Industry* (Radnor, Pennsylvania: Chilton Book Company, 1976) as cited in *Vernacular Architecture in America* by Camille Wells (non-published), 54-73.

2. Warren R. Hofstra, *A Separate Place: The Formation of Clarke County, Virginia* (White Post, Virginia: Clarke County Sesquicentennial, Inc., 1986), 9-12.

3. Clarke County Land Tax Records, 1840. A receipt from The Insurance Company of the Valley of Virginia from the 1865 records of the Elizabeth Rust Williams Estate at Berryville, Virginia shows that the main buildings at Clermont were insured. Among the buildings listed was a one-and-one-half-story house and a stone kitchen two stories high.

4. Records from the Elizabeth Rust Williams Estate at Berryville, Virginia include the burial receipts of one servant and two servant's children at Clermont in 1860.

5. Records from the Elizabeth Rust Williams Estate at Berryville, Virginia include an 1861 receipt paid to a workman for an "outside door to Negro house and hinges – putting partition in Negro house."

6. Clarke County Land Tax Records, 1917.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Clermont, a 355-acre farm located east of Berryville in north-central Clarke County, Virginia, is significant under Criterion A in Agriculture and Criterion C in Architecture. Characterized by rolling pasturelands, the estate is located near the Shenandoah River with a view of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the distance.

Clermont is architecturally significant as a well-preserved agricultural complex of buildings ranging in date from about 1770 to the mid-twentieth century. The farm's original main dwelling, a frame one-and-a-half-story house, probably built by Edward Snickers around 1770, is one of the oldest surviving houses in Clarke County. Representing a prosperous planter's house of the period that is architecturally related to houses of the same era in the Piedmont and Tidewater regions of Virginia, it is an excellent example of the type of house built by Anglo-Virginians who predominantly settled present-day Clarke County during the eighteenth century. The house is also significant for its unusual floor plan—a central passage-single pile plan with a narrow corner stair hall perpendicular to the central passage—a plan that has not been discovered elsewhere in the region. With subsequent additions made circa 1810, circa 1840, and 1970, the house also has remarkably well-preserved interior woodwork of the late eighteenth through the twentieth centuries.

Agriculturally significant, Clermont represents more than 250 years of farming in this central part of Clarke County. Its rich farmland proved to be excellent soil for wheat production and other grains, which were the major agricultural products of the Shenandoah Valley during the latter part of the eighteenth century through the mid-nineteenth century. An influx of settlers migrating from the Piedmont and Tidewater regions of Virginia, many of them younger sons of aristocratic families, to present-day Clarke County during the eighteenth century brought with them the plantation style of farming based on slave labor. After the Civil War a section of Clermont's farmland was made available by its owner for former slaves and other African-Americans to purchase, creating the community of Josephine City, which still exists today and is believed to have been named for a servant at Clermont. In addition to grains, cattle, horses, and sheep helped to sustain the property in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The agricultural landscape of Clermont has been retained throughout its history and the numerous outbuildings covering more than two-and-one-half centuries of farm life, along with the open pastures and cattle grazing, echo Clermont's continuing role as part of the rural agricultural landscape of the county. **Section** 8 **Page** 10

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia

Historical Background

Situated in the eastern part of Old Frederick County, now Clarke County since 1836, along Business Route 7, Clermont rests in a picturesque setting with a rolling landscape situated near the Shenandoah River with a back drop of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The name of the property, Clermont, is believed to be an anglicized version of the French words “clair mont” which means clear mountain. The name is first noted in the will of Edward Snickers, the third owner of the property, dated June 18, 1790.¹

Settlement of the County

As colonial explorers viewed the vast landscape of the Shenandoah Valley from Williams Gap in the Blue Ridge Mountains sometime during the late seventeenth or early eighteenth centuries, they saw a large domain of forested valleys and ridges. Present-day Clarke County would have been included in their view. Clarke County was carved from Frederick County in 1836.² Frederick County, defined in Orange County in 1738 and established in 1743,³ encompassed a vast amount of acreage from which many counties were formed as settlers began migrating into the Shenandoah Valley from Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey, and the Tidewater and Piedmont regions of Virginia.⁴ Some of the first settlers in present-day Clarke County are thought to have arrived in the early 1740s.⁵

A royal charter of 1688 issued to Thomas, Lord Culpeper of England and later inherited by Thomas, Sixth Lord Fairfax, provided a description of the proprietary boundaries of the land in the Virginia Colony in the northern part as being “as the neck of land lying between the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers, extending west to a line connecting their ‘first heads or springs’.”⁶ A difference in interpretation of the boundaries laid down by the charter between Lord Fairfax’s colonial agent Robert Carter and the Lieutenant Governor of Virginia William Gooch caused some confusion. Acting independently of one another, each sought to control and enhance settlement of the lands in the Valley.⁷ However, the pattern of settlement created by the misunderstanding affected the ethnic migration, sizes of farms, farming methods, and architecture among other things and was one of the reasons behind the formation of Clarke County, and its distinct difference from its western neighbor, Frederick County.⁸

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia**

William Gooch began granting land in the late 1720s to settlers in the lower Shenandoah Valley. He intended to settle the Valley as quickly as possible and to help provide a buffer against the French and Indians who had begun to cause concerns and fears on the western frontier of the colony. He encouraged settlement of the Valley by European immigrants including Germans and Scots Irish, many of whom made their way into the Valley from Pennsylvania.⁹

Robert Carter, residing in the Tidewater region of the colony and acting as Lord Fairfax's agent, encouraged the Anglo-Virginian planters from that region to amass large tracts of lands in the Valley for speculation. Carter himself granted over 50,000 acres of land to his sons and grandsons, much of it situated in present-day Clarke County. Some of the land granted by Carter and Gooch overlapped and disputes arose as to the ownership of the properties. Concerns grew in England about the conflicts, and at the death of Carter in 1732, Thomas, Sixth Lord Fairfax, decided to visit the colony where he established his residency at Greenway Court near White Post in present-day Clarke County.¹⁰

Lord Fairfax eventually resolved the conflicts of the Valley land and provided for the settlers to remain in the Valley, leaving Robert Carter's grants, and particularly those granted to his heirs, intact; but henceforth, Lord Fairfax would be in charge of the distribution of the lands within the Valley. This meant that the western part of Frederick County would continue to be settled mostly by European immigrants on smaller parcels devoted to growing small grains such as wheat and rye and creating farmsteads with an assortment of crops and livestock. The eastern part of county lands, which lay relatively open at this point, would see the arrival of many younger sons of aristocratic Tidewater Virginia families who moved there mainly in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to claim their lands, many tracts having been purchased earlier for speculation by their fathers. They brought with them the plantation methods of farming that included slavery. Tobacco and cotton, which had been major crops in the Tidewater in the early to mid-1700s, were on the decline there as the soil became depleted, while wheat was becoming the major crop in the Shenandoah Valley.¹¹

The differences between the eastern and western settlement of Old Frederick County and the distance between the eastern region and the county seat made good reasons for the eastern region to petition the Virginia legislature for a separate county. This petition was granted in 1836 and Clarke County was born, named for the Revolutionary War General George Rogers Clark(e), hero of the Northwest Territory.¹²

Section 8 **Page** 12

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia**

Families of Clermont

The original land grant for the Clermont property was made from Thomas, Sixth Lord Fairfax, Baron of Cameron, to John Vance on May 13, 1751, and was comprised of a 353-acre tract. George Washington, surveyor agent for Lord Fairfax, surveyed the property on October 19, 1750.¹³ John Vance was born in County Tyrone, Ireland in 1699, where he married Elizabeth (maiden name unknown). Around 1731 he and his bride sailed for America disembarking at Philadelphia. According to Vance family descendents, he once owned land in Chester County, Pennsylvania. As Scots-Irish immigrants were being encouraged to settle the Shenandoah Valley, Vance journeyed south into the Valley and acquired nearly 1,000 acres of land before being granted the 353-acre parcel, now the site of Clermont. He was listed as a cooper, a farmer, and a surveyor, and it is believed that his son, Alex, was an assistant to George Washington when the property was surveyed. Vance owned the property only two years before he provided a deed lease/release on the property to Thomas Wadlington in 1753. Vance then purchased 490 acres on Cattail Run near Harper's Ferry, now in West Virginia.¹⁴ His will, dated November 11, 1754, and proved in Frederick County Courts in October 1760, indicates he was in ailing health at the time the will was written.¹⁵

Thomas Wadlington, a planter in Fairfax County at the time of the purchase, was married to Sara Wyatt and served in the French and Indian War.¹⁶ Lord Fairfax granted an additional 36 acres adjoining the Clermont property to Wadlington in July 1760 bringing the total acreage to 389 acres.¹⁷

Records show that in 1770, Wadlington, who lived on the property according to the deed, sold the 389 acres to Edward Snickers,¹⁸ a fellow parishioner of Frederick Parish, who had lived in the area as early as 1749 and who ran a tavern and ferry near Williams Gap (later changed to Snicker's Gap in 1772). He served as a soldier during the French and Indian War and obtained the rank of captain. It is believed that Snickers, who married Elizabeth Taliaferro around 1755, lived at the tavern near the Shenandoah River from 1760 until 1770 when the Clermont property was purchased, and then he and his wife moved there. Snickers was a land speculator who bought and sold properties in several counties including Loudoun, Frederick, and Berkeley Counties. In addition, he received two land grants from Lord Fairfax for properties near

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia**

the Gap, a community later known as Snickersville (changed to Bluemont in 1900).¹⁹ Snickers was a respected gentleman and much admired by George Washington who spoke highly of him. Washington's journals in the early 1770s reveal that as he traveled back and forth from Mount Vernon to Winchester, he lodged and dined at the tavern, referred to as Snickers, at Williams Gap.²⁰ In 1772, the Virginia General Assembly named Snickers as one of ten gentlemen to oversee the "great roads" from Vestal's and Williams Gaps to the Town of Alexandria and Colchester. When the Revolutionary War began, Snickers was a member of the Frederick County Committee of Safety, and he became a principal procurer of food and supplies for the Virginia troops under the command of his friend General Daniel Morgan. During this same time George Washington offered him a position as Wagon-Master General, but he did not accept it possibly because of his advancing years.²¹

Snickers had four children and after the death of his wife in 1779, he remained at Clermont for several years and then left the estate to live with his widowed daughter, Sarah Snickers Alexander, at Springfield in Old Frederick County. His son, William, was left in charge of Clermont. Edward Snickers died in 1791 and in his will, dated June 18, 1790, he bequeathed Clermont, now containing 413 acres, to his son William along with twenty-eight slaves. Daniel Morgan served as a witness to the signing of the will.²² It is thought that Snickers amassed over 4,000 acres during his lifetime.

William Snickers also received additional acreage from his father's will, much of which he later sold. He was considered by some to be a friendly person but one who was careless with money. Young Snickers was a fine horseman, as noted in George Washington's journal, and he was asked by the Virginia General Assembly to make a selection of a horse as a gift for General Daniel Morgan. He served as a gentleman justice of Frederick County.²³ In 1819, Snickers purchased 75 additional acres from adjacent owner Francis Stribling and his wife. In the same year he sold Clermont (resurveyed and now containing 444 acres) and the separate tract, now containing 73 acres lying to the southwest, to Dawson McCormick.²⁴

Dawson McCormick was a descendent of Dr. John McCormick, a graduate of the University of Dublin in Ireland and a Scots-Irish physician, who is believed to be the first physician to settle west of the Blue Ridge Mountains. He came to the Valley from Pennsylvania in the first part of the eighteenth century and settled in the Summit Point area of now Jefferson County, West Virginia. His home, the White House, built around 1742, has been placed on the National

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia

Register of Historic Places.²⁵ Dawson was the son of Thomas and Ann McCormick and was born in Old Frederick County in 1786. In 1824 he married Florinda Milton who was the daughter of John Milton of "Milton Valley." Their first son was named Edward, and he became heir to the property at the death of his father on May 26, 1834.²⁶ Edward graduated from the College of New Jersey (Princeton) in 1845,²⁷ married Mary Elizabeth Stribling in 1847, became sheriff of Clarke County in 1851, and was one of the county's leading farmers. Mary died in 1854, and Edward remarried in 1856 to Ellen Lane Jett who was the fourth daughter of James and Julia M. Jett who resided at Ellersire in Rappahannock County.²⁸

The Civil War brought changes to Clermont. Ellen McCormick left the farm with her three children in 1862 and moved to Amherst County where she lived until after the war. Receipts from the records of Elizabeth Rust Williams show that a house was purchased by her husband near Lynchburg, where she lived during that time.²⁹

At the death of Edward McCormick on March 15, 1871, his entire estate was bequeathed to his wife, Ellen, and the will stated that she could "sell any part of the whole of my real and personal estate, whenever she thinks it necessary."³⁰ About six months after his death, Ellen decided to auction 31 acres of land belonging to the estate to African-American residents of the county. They could purchase one-acre lots for \$100. The deed of Ellen recorded on September 19, 1870 stated that "A lane or street at least 16 feet wide should be dedicated and kept open by the purchasers for other common use and benefit so as to give access at all times as a common right to each."³¹ Today this road is called Josephine Street and is still an African-American community in the Town of Berryville. The deed contains a layout of the lots with the individuals' names listed on each lot (Figure 1). The layout sheet is entitled "Map of Josephine City."³² It is believed to have been named for Josephine, a house servant of the McCormick's, who received the first two lots of the new community.³³ She also sold other land in the county indicating her strain during CW.

Ellen McCormick died at Clermont on May 30, 1908, and the property went to her son, Albert Montgomery Dupuy McCormick, who was born in 1866 and named for his father's friend at the College of New Jersey (Princeton). He became a medical doctor and opened a practice in the Town of Berryville.³⁴ At Dr. McCormick's death in 1932, six heirs became owners of the property--Edith McCormick Beardall, John R. Beardall, Ellen McCormick Pinney, Frank K. Pinney, Lillian Sprigg McCormick and Lynde Dupuy McCormick.

Section 8 Page 15

On September 18, 1958, Edward McCormick Williams and his wife, Caroline Caverly Rust

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia

Williams, purchased Clermont from the heirs of A.M.D. McCormick.³⁵ Edward M. Williams, the grandson of Edward McCormick, was a graduate of Virginia Military Institute in 1923 and received his L.L.B. degree from National University in Washington, D.C. He was admitted to the bar in 1930 and served as Clarke County's commonwealth attorney for 36 years.³⁶ At his death in 1980, Clermont was willed to his wife, Caroline, and upon her death in 1990, her only child and daughter, Elizabeth Rust Williams, became heir to the estate.³⁷

Elizabeth Rust Williams served as Clarke County's first female attorney and the first woman to preside as a judge in the 26th Judicial Circuit. Her career began as a civil and criminal attorney in 1982 and, from 1983 to 1988, she served as president of the Clarke County Bar Association. The Virginia Women Attorneys Association named Williams Outstanding Woman Attorney of Virginia in 1986.³⁸ She was an avid preservationist and took seriously her stewardship of Clermont as a 250-year-old farm. The Virginia Department of Historic Resources inherited the Clermont estate upon the death of Elizabeth R. Williams on July 8, 2004.³⁹

Slave Life

Slavery was introduced into Clarke County as planters arrived from the Tidewater region of Virginia in the mid- to late 1700s. It is believed that Edward Snickers was the first owner of Clermont to use slaves as part of his labor force. In his will to his son William, dated June 18, 1790, who inherited Clermont, he mentions twenty-eight slaves by name :

. . . Also sundry Negroes: Jerry the ferryman, Sall and two children; Peg and Harry, Tom the Ferryman, Flora, Dick, Bob, Manuel, Tom the waggoner, Robin the blacksmith, and his tools, Will, Sampson, Simon, Juliet, Jack, Walker, Jack, a house servant, Peter, Nat, Ned, Jerry, son of Sarah, Sarah, Cupid, and Moses . . .⁴⁰

A resistance movement by slaves, later to be known as the Underground Railroad, was of concern to plantation owners prior to the Civil War. A notice posted in the *Alexandria Gazette* on September 7, 1855 indicates that a Negro man named James Lee, owned by Edward McCormick near Berryville, Clarke County, Virginia, had run away. The notice describes Lee as follows:

Section 8 Page 16

He is 35 or 40 years old; dark copper color; 5 feet 6 or 7 inches high;

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia

hair very short; beard long; teeth bad, some out in front; heavy set;
no clothes on but pants and shirt, all cotton. I will give \$100 for his return
to me at Alexandria, or secured in any jail. Joseph Bruin⁴¹

Correspondence between family members dated November 15, 1855, indicates that there are some problems with some of the servants at Clermont as well as the buying and selling of servants Ned, Bob, and Jack. The letter from sister Kate to brother Edward McCormick states the

. . . pain at the conduct of those two servants, which could only be equaled by our surprise; for we would all have suspected any one else sooner than Ned for any thing of that kind, indeed mother still says she thinks he must have been put up to it by some one.⁴²

Records indicate that one servant girl and two servant children died between July 21, 1860 and August 19, 1861.⁴³

After the Civil War, and at the death of her husband in 1870, Ellen McCormick provided a way for the former slaves as well as other African-Americans to purchase land carved from Clermont to begin a new life for themselves. The last owner of the property, Elizabeth Rust Williams, who was a descendent of Ellen McCormick, believed that both Ellen and her husband, Edward, had been thinking about this division of the land for many years. She wondered if Edward, having attended the College of New Jersey (Princeton) and graduating in 1845, may have developed a more sensitive attitude toward slavery. The new community was named Josephine City and is believed to have been named for Josephine, a McCormick family servant before and during the Civil War.⁴⁴

Agriculture

Clermont has remained a productive farm throughout most of its 250-year history. The location of the land, being situated on a limestone base and laying between the Opequon Creek and the Shenandoah River, provided rich farmland for growing wheat and other grains that were

Section 8 Page 17

prevalent in this part of the county in the latter part of the eighteenth century until just before the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia

Civil War.⁴⁵ The slave labor force that accompanied the Tidewater families as they moved into present-day Clarke County provided the support needed for a productive farm such as Clermont.

With tobacco being on the decline in the Tidewater region, the production of wheat in the Valley provided assurance and hope to those migrating to the Valley. Some tobacco, however, was being grown in the Valley as noted in a 1748 journal kept by George Washington where he mentions “. . . went down the river about 16 miles to Captain Isaac Pennington’s a trip down the river to Captain Isaac Pennington’s land . . . the land exceedingly rich and fertile all the way, produces abundance of grain, hemp, tobacco . . .”⁴⁶

Thomas Wadlington, the second owner of Clermont, had the property for seventeen years before selling it, so in that amount of time it is most likely that he would have been able to get much of the land cleared and planted with subsistence crops such as wheat, corn, and rye, which were common to the first settlers in the Valley.⁴⁷ By the time the third owner, Edward Snickers, acquired the property in 1770, he had the means and slave labor to support a larger production of grain. Snickers owned a merchant mill and gristmill across the Shenandoah River from Clermont, and he was one of the overseers for a road that was built across Williams Gap (Snickers Gap) for the hauling of produce into Alexandria and Colchester.⁴⁸ This channel of commerce, as well as the Shenandoah River, allowed farmers to sell their produce to neighbors across the Blue Ridge Mountains to the east. By 1820, Old Frederick County was the leading producer of wheat production in Virginia.⁴⁹ Snicker’s will in 1819 indicated that he had at least twenty-eight slaves at Clermont, which would indicate that the farm was a prosperous one.⁵⁰

Clermont produced a large amount of grain prior to the Civil War. The 1850 agricultural census reveals that 400 bushels of oats, 2,500 bushels of wheat, 1,250 bushels of Indian corn, and eight tons of hay were harvested at Clermont. Also listed at Clermont for this period were six working oxen, 50 other cattle, 10 milking cows, 16 horses, 75 swine, and five hundred pounds of butter were produced that year.

In 1860 Clarke County led the Valley in the largest percentage of farmland and the largest number of improved farms, although it was the smallest county in size. Records from the Clermont files of 1859 reveal that “Beginning in late February and continuing on into July, Edward McCormick was harvesting on the average of 170 bushels/day – 94 bags/day, about two

Section 8 Page 18

bushels each bag – of red and white wheat and taking it to Spout Spring Mill.” Clarke County ranked second in wheat production during this period.⁵¹ During the Civil War the Valley was

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia

known as the “breadbasket of the Confederacy” because it provided the Confederate troops with food and grain. Union General Sheridan’s barn-burning campaign during the Civil War destroyed many buildings and very few pre-Civil War barns survive in the county today.⁵² Insurance receipts from Clermont reveal that in 1865 a new barn was built at Clermont, which seems to indicate that the farm suffered losses during the Civil War.⁵³

Farming methods changed after the Civil War as the slaves were set free. Farmers turned to cattle production in the late nineteenth century and dairy barns came into existence. Hay production increased in the county during the 1880s. However, wheat, corn, and rye continued to be profitable at the turn of the century and in 1909 Clarke County yielded the highest amount of wheat in the Valley.⁵⁴ The large barn presently at Clermont was built circa 1917 and includes stalls on the lower floor with hay mows and feeding troughs, indicating that livestock were part of Clermont’s livelihood during this period. The upper floors held grain and included built-in corncribs. Two silos from the same period housed grain that was reaped from the farm.

Horses were also a source of income in Clarke County with thoroughbreds coming into the region from the Tidewater area. It is not known if thoroughbreds were kept at Clermont, but throughout its history, horses were a part of the farm, mostly for transportation and labor.⁵⁵ Sheep were also raised during the mid to late nineteenth century as shown in the 1850 agricultural census where 85 sheep were listed on the inventory and one hundred pounds of wool was collected.

Two tenant houses and related outbuildings on the Clermont estate dating from the early twentieth century show that farm management included hired help to do much of the work on the farm. The buildings on the estate cover nearly two-and-one-half centuries of agricultural and architectural history. They tell a story of importance that agriculture has had for the livelihood of this farm, for Clarke County, and for the Valley of Virginia.

Section 8 Page 19

Architecture

Clermont is architecturally significant as one of the earliest surviving dwellings in Clarke

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia

County. Based primarily on the architectural character of the original dwelling on the property, the main house at Clermont dates to around 1770. According to an architectural survey report completed by Clarke County preservationist and architectural historian Maral Kalbian in 1989, only about four known dwellings in Clarke County possibly date to the third quarter of the eighteenth century and none is as well preserved as the house at Clermont.⁵⁶ It is a one-story frame and weatherboard structure with a steeply-pitched wood-shingled gable roof and two exterior-end brick chimneys. The house represents the type of dwelling popular with well-to-do planters of the Piedmont and Tidewater regions of the colony of Virginia during much of the eighteenth century. Since Edward Snickers, believed to have been a native eastern Virginian, had Clermont built, it is not surprising that he may have brought with him his local building traditions.⁵⁷

The dwelling's floor plan is also significant as an example of a central-passage plan with an unusual corner stair hall in the northeast corner of the dwelling containing an enclosed quarter-turn stair with winders. This rare plan type has not been discovered elsewhere in Clarke County or the adjacent four-county region including Frederick, Warren, Shenandoah, and Fauquier Counties where architectural surveys have been completed in recent years.⁵⁸

The main house at Clermont is also significant for its evolutionary character with its well-preserved additions dating to circa 1810, circa 1840, and 1970. According to Maral Kalbian, Clermont is "a rare example of an 18th century vernacular dwelling, interesting for its gradual evolution."⁵⁹

Clermont is also significant as a well-preserved complex of agricultural buildings and domestic outbuildings spanning from the eighteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries. Few similar farms in Clarke County boast such an array of support buildings.

Section 8 Page 20

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia

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Section 8 Page 22

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia

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Section 8 Page 23

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia**

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia

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Section 10 Page 27

UTM References

Zone 18

1.	243420E	4337000N	2.	243900E	4336830N
3.	244240E	4336860N	4.	244740E	4336530N
5.	244590E	4336200N	6.	243840E	4335460N
7.	243080E	4336220N	8.	243155E	4336300N
9.	243115E	4336350N	10.	243280E	4336540N
11.	243205E	4336590N	12.	243280E	4336680N

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia

13. 243200E 4336720N

Boundary Description:

The boundary of the nominated property is delineated by the polygon whose vertices are marked by the following UTM reference points: 1. 18/243420E/4337000N, 2. 18/243900E/4336830N, 3. 18/244240E/4336860N, 4. 18/244740E/4336530N, 5. 18/244590E/4336200N, 6. 18/243840E/4335460N, 7. 18/243080E/4336220N, 8. 18/243155E/4336300N, 9. 18/243115E/4336350N, 10. 18/243280E/4336540N, 11. 18/243205E/4336590N, 12. 18/243280E/4336680N, 13. 18/243200E/4336720N, and as recorded in Clarke County Records as Will Book 36:551, Deed Book 120:238, Deed Book 125:503, and Deed Book 144:791.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the farmhouse, domestic outbuildings, agricultural outbuildings, tenant houses, and fields that have historically been associated with Clermont in its 250-year history as a productive farm.

Section __Photographs__ Page __28__

The following information is common to all photographs:

Name of Property: Clermont
Location: Clarke County, Virginia
Photographer: David Edwards
Date of Photo: March 2005

Location of Negatives: Virginia Department of Historic Resources Archives, Richmond, Virginia

Photo 1 of 21

Negative Number: 22129:23

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia**

Drive leading to Main House, looking south

Photo 2 of 21

Negative Number: 22130:12

Main House, north and east elevations, looking southwest

Photo 3 of 21

Negative Number: 22130:14

Main House, south and east elevations, looking northwest

Photo 4 of 21

Negative Number: 22130:13

Main House, original circa 1770 section, south and east elevations, looking northwest

Photo 5 of 21

Negative Number 22128:11

Porch on south elevation of Main House, looking west

Photo 6 of 21

Negative Number 22130:10

Main House, south elevation, looking north

Photo 7 of 21

Negative Number 22130:6

Main House, west elevation, looking northeast

Section __Photographs__ Page __29__

Photo 8 of 21

Negative Number 22129:24

Main House, west and south elevations, looking east

Photo 9 of 21

Negative Number 22128:19

Main House, ca. 1770 original section, first floor, central passage, looking south

Photo 10 of 21

Negative Number 22128:30

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia**

Main House, ca. 1770 original section, first floor, corner stair hall, looking east

Photo 11 of 21

Negative Number 22128:16

Main House, ca. 1770 original section, first floor, west room (parlor), looking southwest

Photo 12 of 21

Negative Number 22128:29

Main House, ca. 1770 original section, second floor, west bedroom, looking east

Photo 13 of 21

Negative Number 22128:26

Main House, ca. 1770 original section, second floor, west bedroom mantel, looking west

Photo 14 of 21

Negative Number 22130:2

Main House, ca. 1810 addition, first floor, dining room, looking east

Photo 15 of 21

Negative Number 22130:4

Main House, ca. 1820 addition, first floor, bedroom, looking northwest

Photo 16 of 21

Negative Number 22130:15

Smokehouse and Servants' Quarters southwest of Main House, looking west

Section __Photographs__ Page __30__

Photo 17 of 21

Negative Number 22130:9

Servants' Quarters southwest of Main House, looking west

Photo 18 of 21

Negative Number 22129:22

View looking southeast of Main House; Cemetery marked by circle of trees in foreground

Photo 19 of 21

Negative Number 22129:31

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia**

Springhouse and Barn southwest of Main House, looking southwest

Photo 20 of 21
Negative Number 22128:8
Barn southwest of Main House, looking northeast

Photo 21 of 21
Negative Number 22128:3
Circa 1915 Tenant House southwest of Main House, looking south

NPS Form 10-900-a

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OMB No. 1024-0018

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Clermont
Clarke County, Virginia**

2

3

42

43

44

51

52

53

50

51